



Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife 2012 & 2013 Hunter Survey Summary

For a hunter survey to be useful, the number one requirement is that the survey respondents represent the population of hunters we are interested in learning about.

Did the hunter survey accurately represent hunters in MA?

Yes, see below

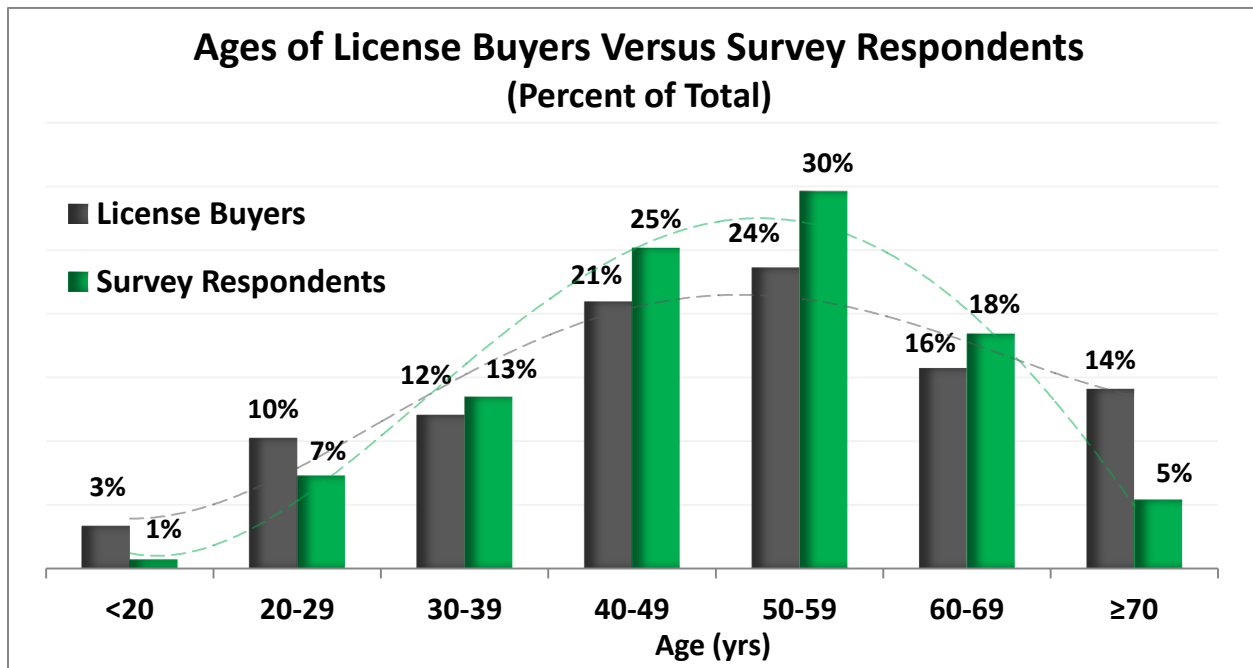
Did we have a large enough sample?

Yes, we had an excellent sample size of over 10% of our hunters.

32,304 invitations were sent (*every valid email in the MassFishHunt system*) and we received 8,906 completed responses in 2012 and 8,802 completed responses in 2013.

Did the survey accurately reflect the ages of all MA hunters?

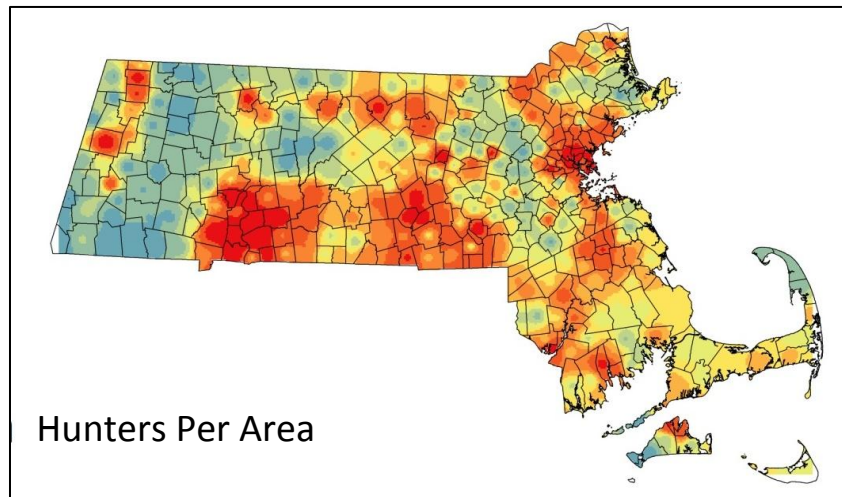
Yes, the survey respondents were very representative of the ages of hunters in MA.



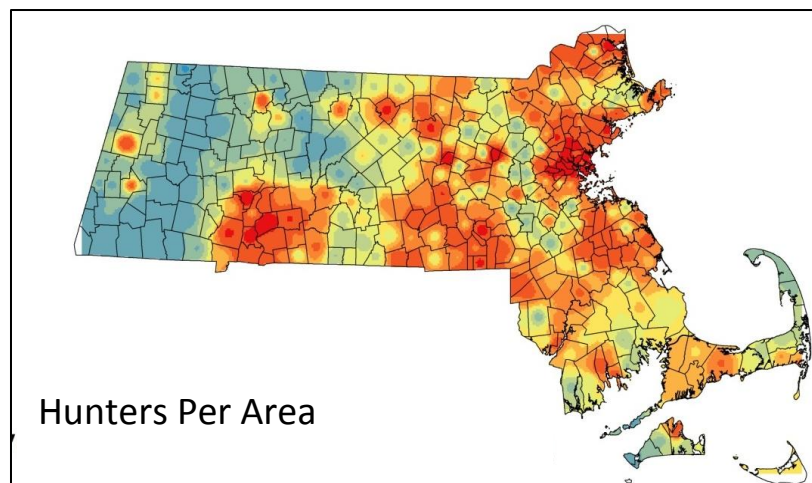
What does this figure mean: The gray bars show ages of all hunters in MA (from 2012 license sales; average age was 48) and the green bars show the ages of the hunters that took the 2012 survey (average age was 50). The fitted bell-curves (dotted lines) look very similar, which means the survey did an excellent job of representing our hunters by age group. There was a slight underrepresentation hunters over 70 and under 30 in the survey.

Did the survey fairly represent hunters across the state?

Yes. We compared the town of residence for all license buyers to the town of residence of those that took the survey. We found that survey did an excellent job of representing hunters across the state (i.e., we did not over-sample any one region).



What does this figure mean: This figure shows the relative density of hunters residing per town based on 2012 license data (so where all of our hunters live). Red = higher density of hunters; blue = lower density of hunters.

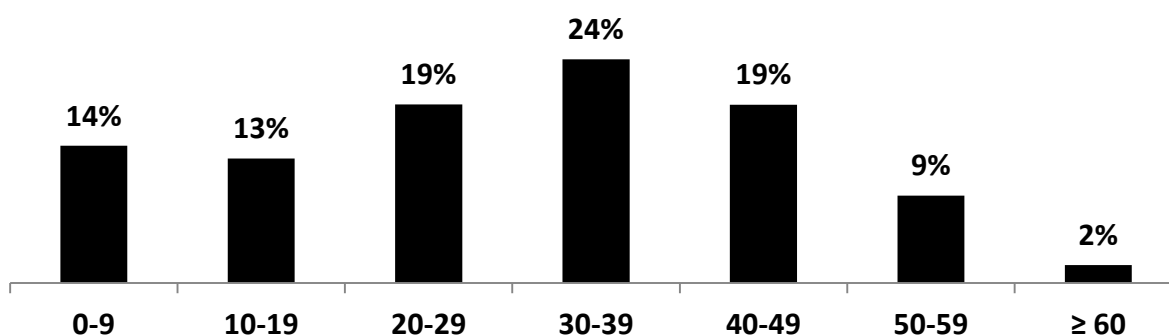


What does this figure mean: This figure shows the relative density of hunters residing per town based on those that took the 2012 survey. Red = higher density of hunters; blue = lower density of hunters. The pattern of color looks very similar in these two maps, meaning the survey was representative of MA hunters, based on where they live.

Survey Results: All Hunting

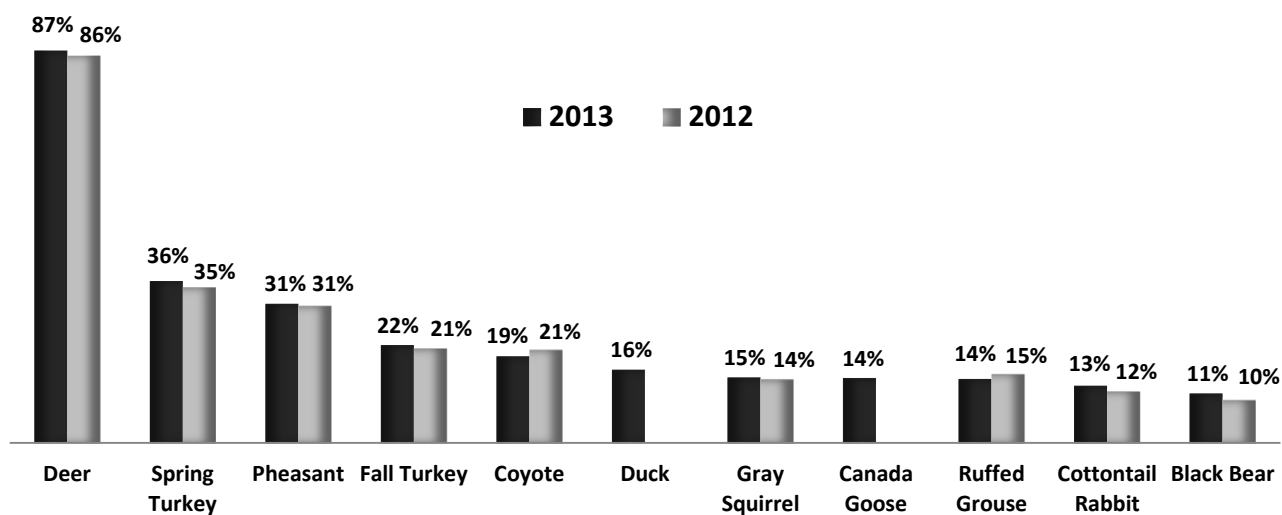
The average reported number of years spent hunting was 28.5 years and the average reported age of hunters was 50 years in the 2012 survey. See breakdown of hunting experience by age group below.

Total Years Hunted (Percent of Respondents)



Of the respondents that reported hunting in 2012, approximately 80% reported that they hunted all 4 of the previous 4 years in Massachusetts. The other 20% were new hunters in MA or “lag” hunters (do not purchase a hunting license every year).

Percent of Hunters by Game Species from Hunter Survey



What does this figure mean: This figure shows the estimated percentage of MA hunters that pursued each major game species, based on the 2012 and 2013 surveys. Game species hunted by less than 10% of hunters were not shown here. Questions about waterfowl hunting were not asked in the 2012 hunter survey.

Survey Results: Deer Hunting

Of the estimated 50,000 – 56,000 deer hunters in MA, 64% hunted during the archery season (same for 2012 and 2013), 90% hunted during the shotgun season (same for 2012 and 2013), and 73% and 71% hunted during the primitive season for 2012 and 2013 respectively; and approximately 50% hunted during all three seasons (same for 2012 and 2013).

Only 60% of shotgun deer hunters reported hunting on the first day of the shotgun season in 2012 and 68% in 2013 (a slight increase in 2013, likely related to snow cover). However, work and other obligations have been documented in other studies as a major factor in the national trend of decreasing hunter numbers and ability of hunters to spend time afield.

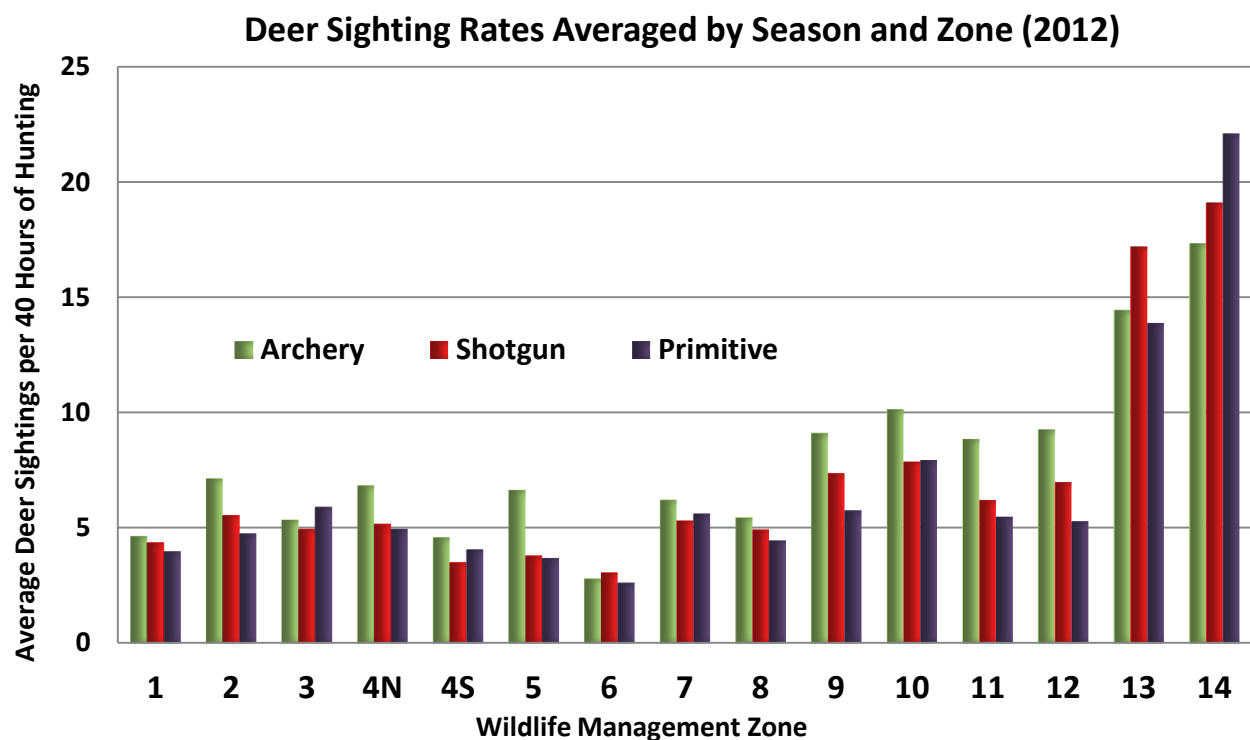
When asked which option best describes your hunting style while deer hunting during the 2-week shotgun season, 47% and 46% (2012 vs. 2013) of respondents reported spending an equal amount of time stationary hunting and walking, 41% and 45% (2012 vs. 2013) reported spending most of their time stationary hunting, and only 8% (same for 2012 and 2013) reported that they spend most of their time walking while shotgun hunting. When asked if they hunt alone or with others in 2013, 56% of shotgun deer hunters reported that they typically hunt alone, but occasionally with others, 24% reported that they typically shotgun hunt in coordination with others, and 19% reported that they typically hunt with others, but not in coordination with them. This is a large change from the historical hunting culture which involved more hunters on the ground moving deer.

Antlerless deer permits:

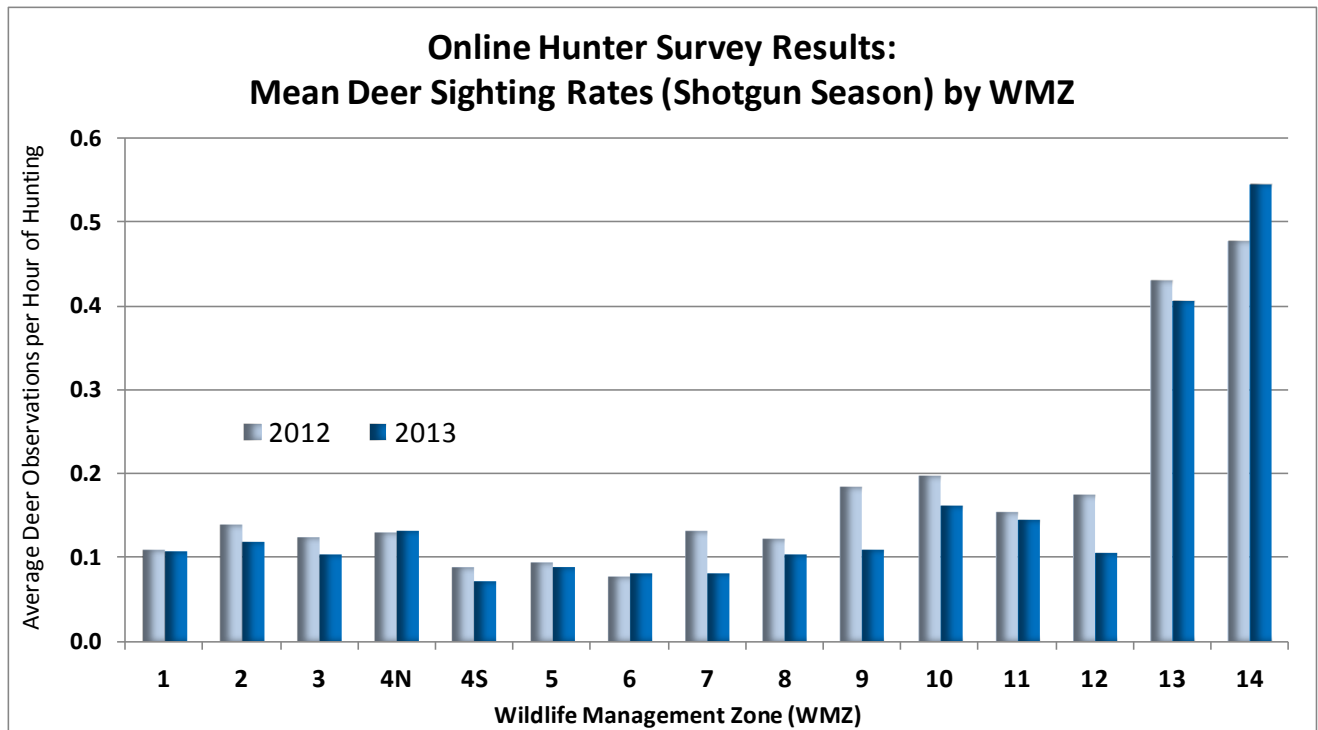
Some hunters are still confused about how antlerless deer permits are awarded. [Click here](#) to see the complete explanation on how to apply and play.

Sighting Rates of Deer:

We also asked how many deer were observed while deer hunting in each zone and season. This is a wonderful opportunity to see what the hunters are seeing on the ground and to complement our harvest data and density estimates.



What does this figure mean: This figure shows the reported number of deer observed per 40 hours of hunting for each zone based on the 2012 hunter survey.



What does this figure mean: This figure shows the reported number of deer observed per hour of hunting during the shotgun season for each zone from both the 2012 and 2013 hunter surveys. Right now we only have 2 years of data, but in the future we can use this information, along with harvest data, to track changes in the deer population over time.